TL 330

CONVENTION ON EAST TIMOR

Lisbon, 14 and 15 March 1992

- FINAL DOCUMENT -

CONVENÇÃO POR TIMOR - LESTE
R. FORNO DO TIJOLO, 73 - 2º D 1100 LISBOA TELF. 814.27.23 FAX. 814.45.99

1. INTRODUCTION

The Convention for East Timor was organized in an attempt to respond to the need to draw together and give a greater expression to the innumerable public demonstrations of solidarity with the people of East Timor which had been shown within Portuguese society, particularly after the November 12 massacre.

When it took place, the presence of more than a hundred (100) organizations of varied backgrounds, including cultural, political, religious, youth and civic, along with the quality of the addresses made - in total there were around seventy (70) speakers - as well as the support of innumerable public figures, all allow one to conclude that the objectives had been achieved. This Convention was a proof of the dynamism and the vitality of Portuguese society and also of the growing awareness in Portugal of the dramatic circumstances of the people of East Timor. Further, it was an affirmation of the desire for an effective participation in the definition, coordinating and the putting into practice of a strategy for Portugal to defend the right to self-determination and independence of that people.

It is important to capitalize on the potential of this initiative and continue the efforts to broaden it so as to include the whole country and also, more generally, to reach international public opinion. East Timor is a universal issue which is today beginning to gain international recognition. The gestures of solidarity and appreciation received from a significant group of international public and political figures is an example of this. It is essential that the issue is not allowed to become stranded on the frontiers of international State interests.

2. SYNTHESIS OF THE WORK OF THE PANELS

2.1. «Human rights, aid and interference in the internal affairs of States»

This panel was chaired by Prof. Jacinto Nunes and had guest speakers Prof. Adriano Moreira and German MP Klaus Kübler (SPD).

The following points were highlighted during the debate:

a) human rights are not an internal affair of States;

b) thus, aid cannot be independent of respect for human rights on the part of receiving regimes. Otherwise it would merely serve to reinforce the power of authoritarian regimes. An example of this is the support given to Jakarta through IGGI («Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia») - responsible for donations of more than 4.7 million US dollars in the last financial year, of whom 30% came from the Japanese government and 25% from the EC. This aid should have the endorsement of the peoples themselves and not merely the receiving States;

c) likewise arms sales should be subject to a rigourous adherence to the stipulations contained in the legislation of the supplying countries which - although usually not enforced - would impede the sale of arms to regimes involved in armed conflicts or who do not respect human rights or international law;

d) Indonesia is at present in an economic situation which makes it sensitive to international pressures based on aid cuts;

e) for geostrategic political reasons, some peoples have suffered a process of genocide which

has condemned them to the category of "dispensable peoples". It is essential to prevent the Timorese people being included in this category. The struggle in East Timor is a universal struggle. Solidarity with it must be counted among the solidarity with all the peoples who find themselves in the situation of being "dispensable" or under threat ;

f) this threat is all the more real as world public opinion ignores the question of East Timor. Attention to the problem outside Portugal has been scant, with the exception of the demonstration at the end of the papal visit in 1989 and the November 12 massacre last year;

g) it is necessary to reaffirm that the question of East Timor is not a conflict between Indonesia and Portugal but rather between that country and the international community. This, however, does not imply that the Portuguese State can shrink from its responsibilities towards the Timorese people;

h) the East Timor question clearly exposes the hypocrisy of States, specifically those of the West, in the conflict between their statements of principle regarding respect for human rights and their practice of complicity with the violation of these very rights, the most obvious examples being the governments of Australia, Japan, USA, UK, Germany, etc;

i) behind the discourse in which the respect for human rights is exalted as a fundamental norm in relations and cooperation between peoples, these States in reality, put their immediate economic interests in first place when conducting foreign policy.

2.2. «The Indonesian regime and human rights violations»

This panel was chaired by Judge Lopes Rocha and had guest speakers Dr Marta Pais, Carmel Budjiarto (Tapol), Dr Paulo Pires (UDT), Ricardo Medina (International Centre for Trade Union Rights) and journalists Saskia Kouwenberg and Russell Anderson.

The situation in which the people of East Timor live at present is an affront to the conscience of men and women throughout the world. However, any action to change this must be based on a knowledge, that is as well-grounded as possible, of the Indonesian regime itself:

a) the practice of genocide, both physical and cultural, being perpetrated by the occupying forces in East Timor, is rooted in the nature and the doctrine of the Indonesian political regime. Indonesia today is an empire which is the result of a unity which was artificially created by Dutch colonization and which has been maintained by means of an authoritarian centralized State, and enshrined in its official doctrine «Pancasilla»;

b) this doctrine furnishes the basis for a nationalist ideology which attempts to homogenize society, and in doing so justify a deliberate policy of human rights violation throughout Indonesia and its occupied territories, and impede any opposition in its interior through recourse to the argument of "national unity".

c) the existence of an "anti-subversion law" provides, from a formal point of view, a legal structure which can legitimate any arbitrary action on the part of those in power. Freedom of expression, the right to free association, the existence of any initiative outside the framework of «Pancasila» are all completely denied to Indonesians and easily labelled subversive;

d) anti-communism, which was originally instrumental in the defeat of Sukarno, continues to be a fundamental component of the Indonesian regime, leading to the persecution and marginalization of many sectors of Indonesian society and has thus made it difficult for opposition political sectors, who might have been more receptive on the question of self-

determination, to emerge;

e) the problem of self-determination raises itself in several regions under Indonesian domination, namely the Molucas, in Aceh - where since 1989 the repression against the autonomy movement has been intense - and in West Papua. The illegal occupation of East Timor must be analysed within the general framework of Indonesian expansionism in the area, even though it is distinct from the others from the juridical point of view;

f) international complacency and support for Indonesia have been as a result of the political, economic and military issues at stake, at the expense of stated principles. The aid policy towards this country has turned a blind eye to the evident disrespect for international law and the systematic violation of human rights;

g) some encouraging signs have appeared, however, from the emerging social movements within Indonesian society itself, who are fighting for its democratization. These have been particularly evident in the work of organizations in the defence of human rights, in the provision of legal aid to political prisoners and in the student movements in defence of the environment:

2.3 «East Timor: roads to self-determination»

This panel was chaired by Lt Col Vasco Lourenço and the invited guests speakers were Prof. Jorge Miranda. Dipa Ramelan (INFIGHT, the Indonesian human rights organisation who had come to Portugal to participate in the convention), Dr José Ramos-Horta (CNRM) and Prof. Roger Clark .

The following points were highlighted during the debate:

a) the situation of East Timor is clearly defined within the UN framework,in that it attributes to Portugal the role of administering power of the territory and it is included on the list of non-autonomous territories. The United Nations has never recognised the annexation of East Timor by the Jakarta regime in spite of the latter's claims that "a genuine act of self-determination" had taken place.

b) the November 12 massacre has made it even more clear that, contrary to these assertions, the East Timor problem not only has not been resolved but that no solution can be imposed against the wishes of the Timorese people.

c) the scenarios unfolding nowadays in the field of international relations go to reinforce what the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM) has been saying for some time: the solution for the conflict will come about through talks without pre-conditions between all the interested parties - representatives of the people of East Timor, Indonesia and Portugal - under the auspices of the United Nations;

d) the East Timor question cannot be simply reduced to a human rights problem, because this presupposes (or can taken as presupposing) that the question of sovereignty is already closed and the problem can be treated by a simple amelioration of the brutal behaviour of the Indonesian authorities;

e) human rights violations, although commonplace under authoritarian regimes, in East Timor are also the result of the determination of the Timorese that they should be conceded the right to decide their future. It is the refusal of the right to self-determination which is at the root of violation of all the other rights. The barbarity, suffering, which has been unleashed on East

Timor is no more than an a show of impotence on the part of the new colonizer;

f) the struggle for self-determination in East Timor cannot be an isolated process. It must take into account the relations of force which are prevalent in our present-day world system, and especially those in the region in which it is situated and among which must be included the struggle for democratization of Indonesian society.

3 THE PORTUGUESE STATE

Many of the speakers referred to the role of the Portuguese State and to the behaviour of the organs of State in the conduct of foreign policy on East Timor. Taken as a whole, these comments expressed the demands of society at large concerning the actions of these organs in bringing about what is stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic.

3.1 The Portuguese State must fully realize the potential of the appropriate aspects of its internal legislation as well as its constitutional obligations (for example, accepting the consequences of considering the Timorese as Portuguese citizens, up to the realization of self-determination and independence) and its policy of alliances in the international sphere.

3.2 The persistence of doubts about the strategy of those in power in Portugal with regard to the problem of East Timor is detrimental to the mobilization of public opinion and the generation of initiatives. Thus, there is a need for:

a) clear objectives and a real openness towards public opinion regarding what is being done (giving clear responses to all the question raised within this sphere)

b) a more concerted action on the part of the organs of State;

c) dialogue, at institutional level, between the Portuguese State and the Timorese Resistance, having particularly in view the achieving of the proposed talks;

d) the setting aside of a sum in the State budget for the promotion in concrete terms of solidarity with the people of East Timor.

e) support for professional and specialized education and training of Timorese, namely through a policy of preferential selection in the awarding of study grants and other means to such an end.

3.3 The necessity for the Portuguese State to act with more firmness and persistence:

a) by utilizing fully the negotiating power which it has , at this moment, in diplomatic relations between the US, EC, Japan and Australia;

b) by having recourse, when opportune, to the organs of the United Nations such as the Security Council, to whom it falls to carry out international law;

c) by concentrating efforts within the five African Lusophone countries and Brazil, which in immediate terms would be directed towards the United Nations General Assembly and the summit of the Non-Aligned States Movement this year as well as the need to intensify

diplomatic contacts with the countries of the South.

d) assuming positions which are in line with the principles being defended in the case of East Timor, in other international situations with the same profile.

3.4 The necessity for the creation of an official structure with responsibility for the whole East Timor dossier along with the means appropriate to the importance of the problem.

4 INITIATIVES ARISING

Proposals for action were numerous, although they had various points in common. Drawing them together:

a) to launch a public awareness campaign to stop consumption of goods of Indonesian origin or from firms, both Portugal and foreign - which maintain commercial links with the Jakarta regime;

b) to avail of the next meeting of the international consortium which finances Indonesia to hold a demonstration - a meeting point for all European groups interested in the question - so as to put pressure on the Western governments to withdraw aid from the Indonesian regime until it respects international law and human rights;

c) to organize a youth «European Train for Timor», which would visit the principal European capitals where it would distribute information about the Timorese holocaust and organize sessions at the various universities, culminating in a simultaneous demonstration in all of them;

d) to support actions already underway against the farcical trials to which Timorese patriots are being subjected and to demand their immediate release;

e) to promote the production of video films on the situation in East Timor, synthesizing what has been produced recently on the question, for distribution to parliamentarians and other political figures in the international community as well as for use by Portuguese organizations for working in conjunction with their counterparts abroad and for dissemination in educational establishments;

f) to launch a campaign in the international press, by buying space in the principal organs of world press, namely in the US, Japan, Australia and EC countries, and to organize the necessary fund-raising;

g) to launch a letter-writing campaign, based around the slogan «120 escudos to pester Mr Boutros-Ghali» directed towards the United Nations Secretary-General and alerting him to the situation in East Timor ;

h) to encourage local town and city councils to liaise with their twinned counterparts abroad so as to hold joint actions around the issue, at institutional and local community level;

i) to create a «Timor booth» where citizens could direct their requests for information, suggestions or proposals for action, thus establishing a concrete channel of communication;

j) to draw up a "menu of suggestions" of activities to be proposed to citizens, by which they can

contribute individually to the Timorese cause by opting for such actions as are within their power to carry out;

k) to create a structure of national scope which would assume the tasks involved in the solidarity activities, define priorities, circulate information, prepare global actions and promote contact both between Portuguese associations and groups and between associations and groups abroad.

5. IN CONCLUSION

The Convention established that there exists a great creativity and willingness on the part of Portuguese civil society to seriously take up the East Timor question. This, however, does not of itself guarantee that generosity will be transformed into movement, and into active solidarity. Such a step presupposes, demands, an express will to opt for this path.

The Convention has laid out for all of us - as has been drawn together in this final document - a wide and diverse range of ways of involving ourselves in the East Timor cause. It now remains for us to show that we are capable of creating the necessary instruments for our involvement to be effective. The suggestions for further work outlined in this document are at the disposition of the community
at large.